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REPORT OF THE SPECIAL SESSION

(26 November 1993

1. In accordance with the agreement reached by ECE member Governments meeting at the Ad Hoc Informal Meeting on 24 September 1993, the Commission held a Special Session on 26 November 1993. It was attended by representatives from Albania, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and United States of America. Representatives of the European Community also participated in the meeting.

2. A representative of the International Labour Office (ILO) participated in the meeting.

3. The meeting was opened by the Chairman of the Commission, Mr. Bernard Miyet (France), who welcomed the new Executive Secretary, Mr. Yves Berthelot.

4. The Commission adopted its agenda as contained in document E/ECE/1285.

Designation of a Vice-Chairman as Chairman of the Commission and the election of a new Vice-Chairman (agenda item 2)

5. The Chairman paid tribute to the work of the ECE and announced with regret that as a result of his assignment to new functions in the service of his Government he was no longer able to serve as Chairman of the Commission. The Special Session had therefore been convened in order to designate a Vice-Chairman as Chairman of the Commission for the unexpired portion of the term, and to elect a new Vice-Chairman, in accordance with ECE rule of procedure No. 15.

6. The Commission designated by acclamation Vice-Chairman L. Dembinski (Poland) as the new Chairman of the Commission, and elected Mr. U. Rosengarten (Germany) as Vice-Chairman. The appointments took immediate effect.

7. The new Chairman and Vice-Chairman made short statements upon their assumption of office. The Executive Secretary also made a statement. A number of delegations congratulated the new members of the Bureau and the Executive Secretary.

Other business (agenda item 3)

8. The delegation of the Russian Federation recalled the proposals made by its delegation at the Ad Hoc Informal Meeting of the Commission in September 1993. It referred to its proposal that the Chairman of the ECE address a letter to the Chairman of the General Assembly advocating the implementation of Commission decisions 1 (1992-S) and E (48) on the question of resources. It indicated that it was also waiting for the Executive Secretary to address a letter as a matter of urgency to the Director-General of UNIDO with a view to ECE participation in the UNIDO project to carry out a study on the state of industry in the areas affected by the Chernobyl disaster. It added that its Government was also waiting for the secretariat to establish working-level contacts with the United Nations Secretariat in New York on the report mandated by ECOSOC dealing with the scientific and technological aspects of conversion.

9. The delegation of the Russian Federation continued by reiterating its Government's wish for the ECE secretariat to prepare contributions to the second session of the CSCE Economic Forum in March 1994 on the creation of favourable conditions for trade and investment, as well as cooperation in the field of science and technology, with a view to industrial development and the strengthening of international competitiveness. It expressed the hope that the Bureau would supervise work called for in these proposals.

10. It went on to express its Government's strong support for the ECE programme of workshops, and pledged that, despite financial difficulties, it would organize events in that framework during 1994 and 1995. On the question of ECE priorities it expressed the view that priorities should reflect the real needs of member Governments, particularly the countries in transition which constituted almost half of ECE membership. It proposed that the possibility be considered of reviewing or adding to the list of five priorities, taking into account the interests of the Russian Federation and other members, particularly in the fields of energy, science and technology, industrial development, the chemical industry and so forth.

11. The Chairman announced that he would convene the next Ad Hoc Informal Meeting of the Commission on 31 January 1994.

12. The present report of the Special Session was approved by the Bureau of the Commission on the basis of a draft prepared by the secretariat.